

Four-Chord Schemas

Keyboard style voice-leading realizations

1. Doo Wop

Doo Wop variant, via chord substitution (ii for IV)*

C Am F G C Am Dm G

C: I vi IV V I vi ii V

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Doo Wop variant. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains C, Am, F, and G. The second system contains C, Am, Dm, and G. The bass line is a simple four-note sequence: C, F, C, G. The treble line consists of triads for each chord. Roman numerals are provided below the chords.

2. Axis, or Singer-Songwriter

Four variants under chord rotation:

On vi Am F C G On IV F G C Am

C: vi IV I V IV V I vi

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Axis variant with 'On vi' and 'On IV' substitutions. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains Am, F, C, and G. The second system contains F, G, C, and Am. The bass line is a simple four-note sequence: F, C, F, C. The treble line consists of triads for each chord. Roman numerals are provided below the chords.

On I C G Am F On V G Am F C

C: I V vi IV V vi IV I

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Axis variant with 'On I' and 'On V' substitutions. It consists of two systems of four chords each. The first system contains C, G, Am, and F. The second system contains G, Am, F, and C. The bass line is a simple four-note sequence: C, G, C, F. The treble line consists of triads for each chord. Roman numerals are provided below the chords.

3. Hopscotch

F G Am C

C: IV V vi I

The musical notation shows a keyboard-style realization of the Hopscotch schema. It consists of a single system of four chords: F, G, Am, and C. The bass line is a simple four-note sequence: F, C, F, C. The treble line consists of triads for each chord. Roman numerals are provided below the chords.

* - Schema variants may be created by chord substitution or rotation.

Reference

Lavengood, Megan and Bryn Hughes. 2020. "Four-Chord Schemas," in Mark Gotham, et al., *Open Music Theory*, v2.
Available online at: <<https://viva.pressbooks.pub/openmusictheory/chapter/4-chord-schemas/>>